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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups: preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

Statement submitted by Caritas Internationalis — International Confederation of Catholic Charities, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Child Welfare League of America, International Federation of Social Workers, International Kolping Society, World Federation of the Ukrainian Women's Organizations, International Federation for Home Economics, International Council of Psychologists, Center for Migration Studies of New York, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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In recognition of the International Day of the Family, 15 May 2003, and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004), we cannot forget that poverty, disease and all forms of violence have a significant negative impact on families.

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To reduce poverty, we look to:

- Capital investment in sustainable development
- Development of jobs for men and women
- Universal free primary and secondary education for our children, especially the girl child
- Empower women in the social, economic and political fabric of each nation
- Improvement of preventive health programmes and accessibility to health-care services
- Make sanitation, clean water and food security available to all

To eliminate disease, we must provide trained medical and nursing assistance as well as education to families on basic nutrition and sanitation. We must strive for universal immunization of children against preventable illnesses. We must offer community assistance to develop preventive and treatment measures in curbing the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is devastating families everywhere but especially in the poorest nations of Africa.

Peace and internal stability are the absolute precursors for having quality services for all families. Therefore it is essential that we eliminate all forms of sexual abuse and violence. In addition, women should be part of peacekeeping activities. It is also self-evident that countries involved in armed conflict, internally and externally, having large numbers of displaced people and refugees, are diverting limited tax funds from social needs to arms purchases and support for military forces.

Programmes should be made by local and national Governments to deal with and prevent abuse of substances, including drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

We urge all Governments, private partners and civil society to adhere to their commitments expressed in the Millennium Declaration. These issues should be the primary objective of the Commission for Social Development.